

# clubs seek regionalisation of reserve section

## SPECIAL REPORT BY 'RANGER'

First they want to know if clubs would accept the principle of the reserve section as constituted at present, and secondly if clubs would support a reserve section system based on the Chesham proposals.

Many of the clubs unhesitatingly replied they did not wish to continue under the present set-up, and all these sent to the first query are fully behind the Chesham proposal.

What is so attractive and alluring about the Chesham proposal?

They have simply requested that the present system be topped; that all reserve leagues compete on a regional basis with the Divisional principle being ditched and substituted by a geographical yardstick.

Basically what this means is that reserve team football receive a massive shot in the arm, for suddenly old rivals could revive the old, long-lost and sadly used old rivalries—and hatreds!

Take for example the position of Marlow at the present moment. Everywhere their Division 2 first team travel, the reserves must follow. But where do they go? (a) from Windsor and Eton, there is not one surviving "derby" or "needle" game in their entire programme.

"The Legends of the Lost" — this is the name Marlow Reserves have applied to themselves for many years — could, under the proposal from Chesham United, suddenly become a far more attractive proposition to watch than the first team. And indeed, to carry this to its logical conclusion, the club treasurer might well rub his hands at the prospect of a Marlow Reserves home game and despair over a forthcoming first team match.

For what Chesham United are asking is for the 48 Athenian Clubs to forget the status of their first teams and play in four sections each containing 12 sides who are near-neighbours.

This could mean that instead of having teams at the Alfred Davis Memorial Ground from Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hertfordshire and Essex, in whom there is next to no interest at all, the second teams from Hayes, Hounslow, Maidenhead United, Slough Town, Southall, Wembley, Wokingham, Uxbridge, Windsor, Chesham and Haverhill.

It will be quickly seen that six of those sides are at present in the Premier Section, two are in Division 1 and the remainder visit Marlow anyway, when the "gate" is usually higher for the visit of these clubs than any other anyway each year.

The whole atmosphere regarding reserve football within

the Division 2 for the past four seasons has been one of frustration and dissonance. The most avid opponents of the present compulsory scheme—and it is a condition of membership that these reserve sides must be run—have usually been the club treasurers.

From personal experience having travelled to over 30 per cent of Athenian League grounds and having liberally discussed this point with club officials, I am not the least surprised that revolution has at last boiled to the surface.

More power in the elbow of Chesham United for kicking open the door. They will undoubtedly have considerable support from every quarter of the Athenian League territory.

It is to be sincerely hoped that Chesham's move carries the day. What is needed today at all levels of administration is common sense. The annual economic disaster inflicted on clubs as a result of having to carry unwanted, unloved and unlooked at Reserve teams, could be transformed by dropping reserve elements entirely.

While this would no doubt make the treasurers happy at the vast savings they could effect as a result on players' expenses, laundry, heating, lighting, water and catering at home as well as travel to away games, there would suddenly be a great many footballers kicking their heels and looking for other clubs.

The Chesham compromise may not be the entire answer, but the whole thing is founded on sound common sense from the clubs' standpoint and league's point of view, and it is certainly deserving of a thorough and fair

A THREE-YEARS reign of watching over and reporting on the activities of Wycombe Wanderers F.C. comes to a close at the end of this week when I say an revoir to the 'Free Press'.

During my spell Wanderers were unable to capture any of the major titles at stake—admittedly a number of minor competitions were won—but there were exciting and tense moments.

Two matches stand out in my memory. Both took place in 1964 and involved cup competitions.

THE DATE: January 26, the place: Norwich, the competition: F.A. Amateur Cup, the opposition: City of Norwich School Old Boys' Union.

Even now the result—a 1-0 success for the Old Boys—seems impossible to comprehend. Wanderers completely dominated the game, scored well over 30 corners but, watched by a 2,000 crowd packed closely round an open playing field, could not get the ball in the net.

It was no accident that it began to get boring to watch as Wycombe pressed relentlessly forward. Worley hit a post, shots were turned regularly off the bar, then almost unobtrusively, Norwich broke away and Alan Taylor who has now turned professional with Norwich City, forced the ball past Mankell.

How vividly I remember the brain journey back from Norwich. Hardly any of the Wanderers players spoke to each other and even months after the result one player remarked to me "I shall never forget that defeat".

The other occasion reaches on a more happy note. The date: April 15, the venue: Chesham, the competition: Berks and Bucks Senior Cup Final, the opposition: Slough Town.

In front of a crowd over the 3,000 mark Wanderers pulled off the coup of the season beating the fancied Slough 3-2 in extra-time.

Drama ran through this clash from the start to the finish. For Wanderers this final was the only glimmer in a poor season. Slough were so confident that the victory banquet had already been ordered.

Goals from Horneham (2) and Saunders disposed of the time winner. Slough's large crowd looking in the Bank Holiday sunshine. I described the game as a blood battle and this was exactly how it was. As I entered the Slough dressing room at the end a number of the players were reduced to tears. No words were needed from their manager Bob Gibbs.

Now as this famous old club, steeped in so much history and tradition, enters the 70s I am worried and concerned over the future. Instead of making progress.

## GOOD LUCK LADS Patrick Vercoe's farewell

action of Louisa Park appears to be on the decline.

The acting of the reserves, which I have already mentioned, is another nail in the coffin. Something must be done to check this downward trend and, perhaps, fresh ideas at the top might be the answer.

In a recent letter to the 'Free Press' present chairman Jack Southam commented he would welcome an offer from younger people to help in the administration of the club.

Those of us who care deeply about Wanderers must be prepared to give up valuable time to help and remove the club to its former glories.

It is no good just one or two individuals coming forward full of enthusiasm. What is required are men who know the game inside out, have the contacts necessary to acquire the right players, and have the business acumen needed to run the club on a professional basis. This surely is a sound basis for recovery.

One question which constantly runs through my mind is how can former players sit back and watch the club slip off its high pedestal which they helped to reach? While not wishing to condemn the present committee, I fully realise they give up valuable spare time and believe sincerely that the decisions they take are for the best. I cannot help thinking that a large slice of the trouble lies on their shoulders.

But, until new faces step forward the present situation will not change. During my stay I have grown deeply attached to the fortunes of Wycombe Wanderers.

I desperately want to see the club succeed. The support is there and its about time the faithful fans were rewarded.

At 4.30 p.m. on each Saturday afternoon during the 70s my thoughts will turn automatically to Wycombe Wanderers and what the outcome of their endeavours on the field have achieved.

I just hope and pray Wanderers will still exist as the 80s begins up.

## Steve Freeman wrecks mighty Aveley in Marlow debut

By 'RANGER'  
Marlow 3, Aveley 1

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers Reserve player, Steve Freeman made a sensational debut for his new club, Marlow, on Saturday.

His appearance on the field as substitute for the injured Bernie Saunders, nine minutes after the start of the second period prompted, influenced and finally fired Marlow into a furious and fabulous drubbing of mighty Aveley—currently leaders of Athenian League, Division 2, and hot favourites for promotion.

While one of the oldest adages in soccer—"One man never made a team"—may testify to its truth every day a ball is kicked, the right guy in the right place can make a tremendous difference to a team, and on Saturday that aptly summed up the situation so far as Freeman was concerned.

For most of the first 45 minutes it looked like being a repeat of what most Marlow fans have become accustomed to seeing far too often—their team dominating the play but not delivering the goods.

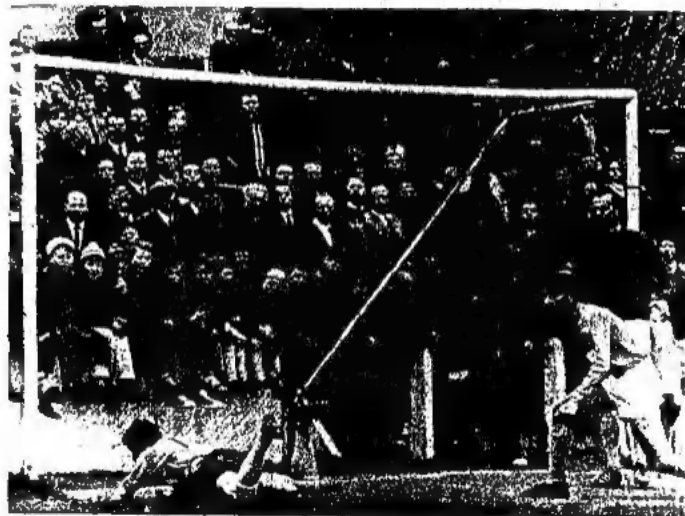
Mick Page—who might well be termed the scourge of Aveley in view of his record against the Essex team—was very unfortunate indeed not to score with a header in the first two minutes.

Page actually netted in the 15th minute but this was ruled out because of alleged offside against him.

Then with 22 minutes gone, Alan Berreclough, a fine and powerfully-built inside-right, made a magnificent goal out of virtually nothing at all. He sent in a whizz-bang of a shot from the left-hand edge of the penalty area, across goal and the ball raged home into Dave Wigley's right hand side of the net. The move started with a throw-in away on the right wing and there appeared at that moment to be no danger whatever!

It seemed obvious that goals would come if this pressure was maintained by the Bucks side, but even with Bernie Saunders doing all he knew until injured in the 34th minute, Marlow still trailed. Then Saunders was cranked in a collision with Tony Wiseman, the Aveley keeper.

On stopped Freeman. In the 35th minute Marlow were level. Both Freeman and Radmore so rattled in the Aveley defence that finally Tony Rogers, the league leader in right-back, in making an obvious attempt to scoop the ball over the bar for a corner got out of trouble, only succeeded in heating Wiseman with a job that was not strong enough.



The crowd give vent to their feelings as Tony Horneham goes full length for a cross, which he just missed, with the Sutton defence wide open.

## Chalfont miss forward power and lose a negative game

Chalfont St. Peter 0, Egham Town 1

CHALFONT ST. PETER's need for effective strikers was clearly underlined by this uninteresting Spartan League match at the Playing Fields on Saturday. Negative football was the order of the listless day.

The number of really determined efforts at goal-scoring could be counted on one hand—one of these coming from Dave Timberlake in the first half with a powerful angled shot which goal-keeper Shrimpton just managed to stop.

Undoubtedly, the home team's best effort came from Derek Breslin in the 39th minute when he ran onto a good cross by Timberlake and his determined header crashed against a post.

The only goal of the match was scored in the 88th minute, resulting from a corner by Egham. The ball was cleared out by the Chalfont defence and Barry Catoe hit a low drive from 25 yards, through a sea of legs which left Frank Howard temporarily unguarded. It was unfortunate for Howard who



Tony Horneham is harassed in mid-air during Saturday's clash with beaten Amateur Cup finalists Sutton United.

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